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# Monitoring and Evaluation of Human Trafficking Partnerships in England and Wales

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## Abstract

In the United Kingdom, human trafficking and, more recently, modern slavery has been pushed up the political and policy agenda. At the same time, partnership working has been promoted at international and national levels in order to encourage a more holistic response to trafficking. This article examines the nature of the evidence collected to monitor and evaluate the activities and outcomes of organisations involved in a number of human trafficking partnerships in England and Wales. Underpinning this analysis is the ‘4 Ps’ approach to tackling human trafficking: Prevention, Protection, Prosecution and Partnership. Based on interviews with a variety of actors working in different partner bodies, limitations of evidence in relation to both monitoring activities as well as evaluating outcomes emerged. These relate to inadequate data collection, lack of robust methods of data collection, untested assumptions, the complexity of gathering evidence which reflect human welfare oriented goals, and the sharing of evidence between partner organisations. A key finding is that current data and methods of data collection are inadequate for the purpose of measuring the effectiveness of anti-trafficking initiatives and partnerships. Another key finding is the way in which partnerships challenged received outcomes and expanded their focus beyond victims of trafficking or criminal justice goals. Finally, I explore whether criminal justice outcomes can be leveraged to foster deterrence, by interrogating what evidence might be needed.

**Keywords:** human trafficking, monitoring, evaluation, evidence, partnerships

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## Introduction

Human trafficking has been pushed up the political agenda in the United Kingdom (UK) as a result of new legislation, including the Modern Slavery Act of March 2015, and the appointment of an Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner with a remit ‘to encourage good practice in the prevention, detection, investigation and prosecution of modern slavery offences and the identification of victims’.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, the designation of modern slavery as a threat by the National Crime Agency (NCA) has demonstrated the importance attached to tackling human trafficking and other forms of enslavement as serious organised crimes.<sup>2</sup>

The Modern Slavery Act which covers England and Wales has had a number of profound consequences. Firstly, it has simplified the legislative landscape by bringing a number of different offences under one act. Thus, the Act has reflected the findings of the Modern Slavery Bill Evidence Review, which sought to focus attention on the act of enslavement and ensure all related offences—slavery, servitude, forced labour and human trafficking—were encompassed under the umbrella term ‘modern slavery’.<sup>3</sup> Secondly, the Act has guaranteed the same level of protection to victims of all forms of enslavement. Thirdly, it has established the same level of scrutiny and penalty for all the offences. Finally, police, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), local authorities, and other professional bodies have widened their remit to encompass modern slavery, where hitherto they had focused on human trafficking.

<sup>1</sup> Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner, *Annual Report 2015-16*, London, 2016, p. 8, retrieved 21 March 2017, [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/559571/IASC\\_Annual\\_Report\\_WebReadyFinal.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/559571/IASC_Annual_Report_WebReadyFinal.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> NCA, *National Strategic Assessment of Serious and Organised Crime 2016*, retrieved 21 March 2017, <http://www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/publications/731-national-strategic-assessment-of-serious-and-organised-crime-2016/file>

<sup>3</sup> B Butler-Sloss, F Field and J Randall, *Establishing Britain as a World Leader in the Fight against Modern Slavery: Report of the modern slavery bill evidence review*, 2013, retrieved 1 October 2016, <http://www.frankfield.com/upload/docs/Modern%20Slavery%20Bill%20Evidence%20Review.pdf>

For the purpose of this article, I will use the term human trafficking with reference to victims and to activities and partnerships aimed at tackling human trafficking, as well as the wider forms of enslavement referred to in the UK as ‘modern slavery’.

There has been considerable development in national human trafficking policy in England and Wales over the last ten years. Moreover, at the local level, NGOs and statutory bodies like the police, local authorities and the National Health Service (NHS)<sup>4</sup> have been engaged in a wide range of activities to prevent human trafficking, raise awareness, identify possible victims, provide support and care to victims, and investigate and prosecute those responsible for trafficking. In order to provide a more effective response to human trafficking, an increasing number of these organisations have come to work in partnership.<sup>5</sup>

This policy and practice has been subject to critical review, whereby good practice has been described, breaches of the Council of Europe Convention against Trafficking in Human Beings (hereafter ‘European Convention against Trafficking’) have been discussed, and areas requiring improvements have been identified.<sup>6</sup> In addition, the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Human Trafficking and Modern Day Slavery has recommended significant changes in data capture and sharing in order to enhance the response to human trafficking.<sup>7</sup>

This article provides further insight into the issue of data capture and use. It explores the nature of evidence collected, its constraints and limitations, and its effectiveness, in relation to monitoring and evaluating anti-trafficking initiatives and partnerships. It is underpinned by primary research undertaken between 2013 and 2016 to explore partnership working on human trafficking. The research entailed interviews with people involved in anti-trafficking activities including fifteen police officers, staff working in a wide range of NGOs, immigration enforcement officers, local government officials, and those who fostered partnerships between these different organisations. Interviews were undertaken in four parts of England and Wales that reflected both Metropolitan and rural communities. It also draws on research undertaken for a local authority-sponsored human trafficking operational group<sup>8</sup> that asked for help to collect and collate data in order to improve their response to trafficking.

Monitoring and evaluation should be fundamental aspects of organisational activity, both for accountability purposes and to judge whether aims have been achieved. This may present organisational challenges in terms of capacity to engage in data collection and analysis, adequate systems to record data, and understanding what data needs to be collected for different purposes. Measuring inputs (activities undertaken in relation to prevention, victim protection or investigations) may be the easiest information to collect and record, but it is insufficient to measure outcomes or impact, i.e. the change brought about by interventions.<sup>9</sup> Gallagher and Surtees note that measuring the success of anti-trafficking initiatives depends on which stakeholders are asked to comment on success; hence, evaluations of outcomes may only be partial.<sup>10</sup> A question this paper seeks to address is what evidence is collected

<sup>4</sup> The NHS is the UK’s publicly funded national health care system.

<sup>5</sup> For example, The Human Trafficking Foundation supports a network for human trafficking partnerships in England and Wales.

<sup>6</sup> The Anti-Trafficking Monitoring Group of nine NGOs has undertaken a wide range of reviews about how the UK government and relevant organisations have responded to the requirements of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings. Their reports are: *Wrong Kind of Victim? One year on: An analysis of UK measures to protect trafficked persons*, 2010; *All Change: Preventing trafficking in the UK*, 2012; *Hidden in Plain Sight. Three years on: Updated analysis of UK measures to protect trafficked persons*, 2013; *In the Dock: Examining the UK’s criminal justice response to trafficking*, 2013; *Class Acts? Examining modern slavery legislation across the UK*, 2016, Anti-Slavery International, London. See also: C Robinson, *Preventing Trafficking for Labour Exploitation*, Focus on Labour Exploitation, London, 2015; Slavery Working Group, *It Happens Here: Equipping the United Kingdom to fight modern slavery*, Centre for Social Justice, London, 2013; and GRETA, *Report Concerning the Implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings by the United Kingdom: Second evaluation round*, 2016, retrieved 19 October 2016, <https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=09000016806abcd>

<sup>7</sup> All-Party Parliamentary Group on Human Trafficking and Modern Day Slavery, *Inquiry into the Collection, Exchange and Use of Data about Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery*, London, 2014.

<sup>8</sup> This local authority-sponsored human trafficking operational group includes staff from local authority departments, a wide range of local NGOs who work with human trafficking victims or vulnerable adults, national and international organisations that include human trafficking in their remit, local and specialist police officers, staff from the National Health Service, organisations working with the homeless.

<sup>9</sup> D Parkinson and A Wadia, *Assessing Change: Developing and using outcomes monitoring tools*, Charities Evaluation Services, London, 2010.

<sup>10</sup> A Gallagher and R Surtees, ‘Measuring the Success of Counter-Trafficking Interventions in the Criminal Justice Sector: Who decides—and how?’, *Anti-Trafficking Review*, issue 1, 2012, pp 10-30.

and used by organisations involved in anti-trafficking work in England and Wales. However, it is not just what organisations do on their own that matters. Monitoring activities undertaken on behalf of a partnership, an evaluation in relation to outcomes achieved, and the value added through collaboration are also necessary.<sup>11</sup>

The sections that follow discuss the kinds of evidence used to monitor or evaluate awareness-raising and training, victim identification, victim support, and criminal justice responses. Some of the limitations of the evidence collected, as well as constraints to data collection and analysis, will also be highlighted. Finally, I will briefly explore whether evidence collected from criminal justice responses can be used as a proxy measure of deterrence.

## Evidence about Awareness-raising and Training of Front-line Professionals

Awareness-raising amongst the public and training of staff, in particular front-line professionals, has been promoted by international and national policy.<sup>12</sup> It appears to be NGOs in the UK who have developed the expertise to offer awareness-raising or training packages.<sup>13</sup> Thus an awareness-raising NGO may be a critical organisation in an anti-trafficking partnership as it can provide the capability to enhance understanding of human trafficking, of indicators of trafficking and, where appropriate, points of referral. This leads to the question about what evidence is collected to determine what activities took place (monitoring data), and the outcomes achieved (evaluation data). The European Communities Against Trafficking Project (ECAT) based in Westminster and the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, and Just Enough UK<sup>14</sup> can be used to illustrate issues related to evidence.

As part of the partnership model developed by ECAT, Stop the Traffik was charged with developing and delivering a wide range of awareness-raising events including the Gift Box exhibition, film nights, and other public meetings in 2013 and 2014. In addition, it provided training for thousands of front-line staff working for local authorities, the NHS, police and Home Office<sup>15</sup> immigration enforcement teams. Data was collected in relation to the number and type of events, and the number of participants. This allowed them to demonstrate they had fulfilled their brief to provide awareness-raising and training as part of the ECAT project.

Just Enough UK offers an interactive drama programme, which has been taken up by an increasing number of primary schools located in various parts of the UK. It aims to raise children's awareness of human trafficking, and to help children learn five signs of slavery which they may be able to use to discern victims in a situation they witness. Just Enough UK collects data on the number of schools, children and teachers participating in the awareness-raising events.

The monitoring data collected by ECAT and Just Enough UK may serve a very important function for partners and for funders as they document the scale of work undertaken. This can be used to judge if the promised activities were carried out. However, this data is not adequate if organisations or funders seek information about outcomes or impact.

Awareness-raising and training of professional staff assumes that by providing information about human trafficking, the public and front-line staff will be aware of what constitutes trafficking, acquire knowledge about indicators of human trafficking, and, where appropriate, know what they should do if they come across possible cases. Monitoring data however does not provide an indication of learning. Moreover, while 'evaluation forms' might provide legitimate feedback on what participants thought about an event, these forms cannot be used to evidence

<sup>11</sup> P Williams, *Making a Difference Together? Planning, monitoring and evaluating voluntary and community sector collaborative working*, Charities Evaluation Service, London, 2010.

<sup>12</sup> For example, by the European Convention against Trafficking, HM Government's Human Trafficking Strategies and, more recently, the 2014 Modern Slavery Strategy.

<sup>13</sup> For example, Stop The Traffik, Unchosen, Just Enough UK, Unseen and ECPAT UK are some of the NGOs that provide awareness-raising to the public or undertake training of staff working in different settings.

<sup>14</sup> The ECAT Project was a West London partnership between two local authorities, the Human Trafficking Unit of the Metropolitan Police Service, Rahab, an NGO that cares for women associated with prostitution or who are victims of trafficking, Stop the Traffik, which operates to prevent trafficking and raise awareness, and the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime. Just Enough UK is an NGO that raises awareness of modern slavery amongst primary school children and is sponsored by a wide range of donors. It has partnered with the MPS specialist trafficking unit to train the staff that work in schools.

<sup>15</sup> The Home Office is the UK government department for home affairs, including national security, police, emergency services and immigration.

'learning'. Just Enough UK does seek to obtain such information as it asks pupils to record what they learnt from their session. However, a more robust form of evaluation of awareness-raising events would entail pre- and post-event questionnaires or interviews to determine the change in the level of understanding of human trafficking. Hester and Westmarland included pre- and post- questionnaires and interviews in order to evaluate awareness-raising activities in schools in relation to domestic violence, and this could well be a model for awareness-raising related to human trafficking.<sup>16</sup> However, this is a time consuming and costly method of collecting evidence. Local authorities and NGOs would require capacity, in terms of time and a budget, to undertake such research. These practical constraints to evaluation have been noted elsewhere.<sup>17</sup> Therefore, it is possible that evidence on awareness-raising will continue to focus on monitoring inputs (events) and outputs (number of people trained) rather than outcomes or impact.

From Marshall's standpoint, organisations engaged in awareness-raising initiatives should seek to measure and evaluate changes not only in understanding and attitudes but also in behaviour.<sup>18</sup> In the UK context, the desired impact of awareness-raising is that people will now report possible victims of human trafficking they encounter, and this information will be recorded and, where necessary, passed to the relevant institutions. As discussed in the next section, record keeping may be a problem. Just Enough UK illustrates how impact can be measured. Faced with an unforeseen outcome, which entailed children reporting possible cases of human trafficking following a drama presentation, the organisation created a mechanism to record and to transmit this information to appropriate people (e.g. head teacher or police) who could take action. These reports, while small in number,<sup>19</sup> can be used as a measure of short-term impact. Therefore, Just Enough UK has collected evidence that can be used for evaluative purposes. It has data from children related to a learning outcome, and on impact, i.e. a report about something children had witnessed and felt might constitute human trafficking.

While training of front-line professionals has been a key policy goal, this is not just because gaining understanding is important in its own right, but because it is assumed that training professionals on human trafficking and indicators will lead to the identification of victims, and thereby facilitate their protection and criminal investigation of their cases. The question is, is this the case? Is there evidence in the short term that training facilitates victim identification or might this be a long-term outcome which makes it more difficult to evidence a relationship between training and victim identification?

## Evidence about Victim Identification

The UK National Referral Mechanism (NRM) provides the available evidence about the number of people officially recognised as 'potential victims of trafficking'.<sup>20</sup> As people have to consent to referral, there is an acknowledged gap between those identified as presumed victims by a wide range of organisations and those reported to the NRM.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>16</sup> M Hester and N Westmarland, *Tackling Domestic Violence: Effective interventions and approaches*, Home Office Research Study 290, Home Office, London, 2005.

<sup>17</sup> A Gallagher and R Surtees, *Assessing the Impact and Effectiveness of Counter-Trafficking Interventions in the Criminal Justice Sector: A discussion paper on issues, obstacles and opportunities*, Asia Regional Trafficking in Persons Project, 2012, retrieved 27 June 2016, <https://nexushumantrafficking.files.wordpress.com/2015/03/assessing-impact-and-effectiveness-of-at-interventions-in-cj-sector-gallagher-surtees-2011.pdf>

<sup>18</sup> P Marshall, *Re-Thinking Trafficking Prevention: A guide to applying behaviour theory*, United Nations Inter-Agency Project on Human Trafficking, Bangkok, 2011.

<sup>19</sup> Interview, Just Enough UK, July 2015.

<sup>20</sup> Those referred to the NRM are considered 'potential victims' of human trafficking until a Competent Authority decides they meet the criteria to be determined a victim. There are acknowledged gaps between someone believing an individual shows some indicators of human trafficking and is deemed a possible or presumed victim, and those individuals entered into the NRM who seek official recognition of their experience. Elsewhere in the article, I have used the term possible or presumed victims which reflects the fact that someone has decided these individuals show some indicators of human trafficking.

<sup>21</sup> The National Crime Agency estimated that about 1,600 potential victims of human trafficking were not referred to the NRM for a variety of reasons. See: Home Office, *Review of the National Referral Mechanism for Victims of Human Trafficking*, London, 2014. The Anti-Trafficking Monitoring Group (ATMG) also stated that the NRM under-records the number of victims of human trafficking because a number of people do not consent to referral and because of poor decision making by the Competent Authorities about who is deemed a victim within the criteria of the European Convention. See: ATMG, *Wrong Kind of Victim*, 2010.

Nevertheless the number of potential victims referred to the NRM has grown significantly in the last two years—by 34% in 2014 and by another 40% in 2015.<sup>22</sup>

Data from the NRM for 2015 indicates that 17.2% of potential victims were referred by NGOs, 23.2% by the police, just over 50% by government agencies (e.g. Home Office, NCA, UK Border Force), and the smallest, 9.4% by local authorities.<sup>23</sup> Training of front-line professionals across the UK as a whole might be one of the factors leading to a significant increase in the number of potential victims referred to the NRM since 2013: from 1,745 in 2013 to 3,266 in 2015.

On a more local level, is there evidence that training does lead to improved victim identification? In the case of a local authority-sponsored human trafficking operational group, data was available on the number of training events and participants. However, almost no data was provided with respect to victim identification within local authority departments. On the other hand, partner bodies, like an NGO working with homeless people and NGOs working with women selling sexual services, did provide data. They specified the number of potential victims of human trafficking encountered in specific time frames.<sup>24</sup> Digging deeper, two explanations emerged. The first was that front-line staff might not be encountering possible victims in the context of their local authority work, and thus there were no victims to identify in the time period after training. The second was that there was no means of recording this data within official information systems. As a result, there was no means of capturing and communicating front-line staff's encounters with victims. The one exception was Adult Social Care. It seemed a victim of trafficking could be identified because of local authority interpretation of the Adult Social Care Act of 2014. The Act led to changes in the kinds of records the local authority kept, and now included human trafficking in the assessment of risk of abuse or neglect. Staff could tick a box or include a more detailed account of human trafficking in a qualitative description of an individual's risks. Thus, there was official data that could be analysed to identify victims of trafficking known to a specific local authority department.<sup>25</sup>

Without data it was not possible to establish a baseline of possible or officially confirmed victims of trafficking known to the local authority and, as a result, to assess the impact of training of front-line staff over time. Thus, training programmes as part of a partnership relationship may continue to be offered because their value is assumed.

Partnerships that incorporate an organisation that offers training is one possible means of enhancing victim identification in partner bodies. A different method is to make it easier for partners to report possible victims. The one-page on-line referral system developed by the Human Trafficking Unit of the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) provides such an example. It can be accessed by sixty different organisations in London, and officers stated it enhanced victim identification.<sup>26</sup> They pointed to an increasing number of victims referred and recorded in their victim referral database.<sup>27</sup> From a police perspective, partnership working was deemed effective based on the evidence of more victims being recorded by the police which led to more investigations of human trafficking.

The lack of records on possible or officially recognised victims of human trafficking, referred to above, has significant implications in terms of understanding the experiences of this group, gathering evidence about what services they use, and the outcomes arising from service use.

## Evidence about Victim Support and Protection

<sup>22</sup> UKHTC, *National Referral Mechanism Statistics—End of Year Summary 2014*, National Crime Agency, 2015, retrieved 27 June 2016, <http://www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/publications/national-referral-mechanism-statistics/502-national-referral-mechanism-statistics-end-of-year-summary-2014/file>; UKHTC, *National Referral Mechanism Statistics – End of Year Summary 2015*, National Crime Agency, 2016, retrieved 27 June 2016, <http://www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/publications/national-referral-mechanism-statistics/676-national-referral-mechanism-statistics-end-of-year-summary-2015/file>

<sup>23</sup> UKHTC, 2016.

<sup>24</sup> Some of the potential victims had been referred to the NRM, but others were presumed victims based on indicators of trafficking.

<sup>25</sup> It was unclear if the victim of human trafficking had been recognised through the NRM process or was accorded this status by Adult Social Care or by a partner agency that referred her to the local authority.

<sup>26</sup> R Van Dyke, *Enhancing the Effectiveness of Policing Human Trafficking: Report 1*, produced for the Human Trafficking Unit of the MPS, London, 2014. The report was based on interviews with one-third of the Unit's staff.

<sup>27</sup> Officers referred to victims based on indicators of vulnerability, not based on official recognition via the NRM process.

The European Convention against Trafficking established the principle that countries had a duty to provide support to victims to meet their individual needs. Available evidence points to a variety of statutory and civil society organisations offering support to victims of human trafficking. While these have gone some way to meeting the UK's Convention obligations, it has been recognised that this provision is inadequate and a standard has been devised to improve care to survivors.<sup>28</sup>

Some NGOs have focused on working with victims of human trafficking, while others have expanded their remit to cover working with vulnerable groups. In the UK, the Salvation Army has been awarded the government contract to provide support to victims who are referred to the National Referral Mechanism.<sup>29</sup> It sub-contracts to a number of NGOs including Hestia, BAWSO, The Medaille Trust, Migrant Help, and the Palm Cove Society. While these NGOs provide significant support to survivors of human trafficking, they need to call on the expertise and resources of statutory bodies to improve survivors' physical and psychological well-being or to help them access new employment opportunities.

There is anecdotal evidence from NGOs encountered in my research that they help survivors access a variety of statutory services, in particular NHS services, and Job Centres. What appears to be missing is concrete evidence which can be used to build up a picture of what services are accessed or what bottlenecks or barriers hamper entry to services needed by survivors. Anecdotal evidence obtained from NGOs was that access to housing was a key barrier to 'moving on' for survivors of human trafficking. From a monitoring perspective those providing protection and support to survivors of human trafficking should be able to provide a comprehensive account of service use—the inputs which are intended to aid the recovery and re-integration of victims.

Analysis of data for a local authority-sponsored human trafficking operational group suggests the problem with the evidence base is inadequate systems of record keeping. As discussed, if local authority departments do not capture information indicating that a person seeking or accessing services is a possible or officially recognised victim of human trafficking, then the authority will not be able to assess what services are being used or what services appear less accessible. As a result, it will not be able to evaluate the extent of provision it makes for victims of human trafficking who live in their community, or judge if it is sufficient in relation to their desired outcomes for survivors.

From the standpoint of partnership working to tackle human trafficking, inadequate record systems in local authorities undermine its ability to evaluate how it operates in a victim-centred way by partnering with NGOs or other agencies to support a survivor.

Research showed that two new forms of evidence need to be collected. The first relates to a wider group of people who are identified in the course of partnership activities. This group may be deemed as vulnerable, or as experiencing abuse or exploitation but may not meet the criteria to be recognised as victims of human trafficking. However, they are recognised as a group who require advice and support to reduce their vulnerability. In other words, some partnerships have recognised that there is a continuum of vulnerability which requires a response. Victims of trafficking are just one element of this continuum.

The second form of evidence relates to outcomes. Respondents made a case for well-being or human rights oriented rather than criminal justice focussed outcomes. Reference was made to improving survivors' or vulnerable people's situation by requiring landlords to make housing improvements, or by enabling people to access local authority or NHS services. In addition, respondents proudly talked about enhancing survivors' employment opportunities by helping them enrol in English classes, register for a national insurance number, or seek advice from a Job Centre.

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<sup>28</sup> C Beddoe, L Bundock, and T Jardan, *Life Beyond the Safe House for Survivors of Modern Slavery in London*, Human Trafficking Foundation, London, 2015; M Malloch, T Warden and Niall Hamilton-Smith, *Care and Support for Adult Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings: A review*, Scottish Centre for Crime and Justice Research, Stirling, 2012; C Andreatta, R Witkin and K Robjant, *Trafficking Survivor Care Standards* 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, Human Trafficking Foundation, London, 2015; PRO-ACT, *Pro-Active Identification and Support in the Netherlands, the UK and Romania*, Focus on Labour Exploitation (FLEX), FairWork and ADPARE, 2015, retrieved 10 October 2016, <http://www.labourexploitation.org/sites/default/files/publications/Pro-Act%20Research%20Report.pdf>

<sup>29</sup> The UK government has fulfilled its obligations under the European Convention against Trafficking by providing a mechanism for the referral of potential victims (the NRM) which ensures they are able to access government-funded support. The Salvation Army facilitates provision in England and Wales while decisions are reached on the status of referred persons.



Record keeping in terms of engagement with landlords leading to improved housing, or with the NHS or Job Centres may be used as proxy measures for enhanced choice, well-being or fulfilment of human rights obligations. The question here is, can these outcomes be evidenced without asking the survivors themselves, which might require the collection of more in-depth data, as well as looking at what happens to survivors after they have received a range of services?

For example, Rahab, a partner organisation in the ECAT project, has a long-standing commitment to 'care for women affected by prostitution and human trafficking for sexual exploitation'.<sup>30</sup> It is committed to providing support to women in crisis through a range of services, and over time seeks to create choices for the women and then enable them to make choices about their future lives. It operates on the basis of a person-centred approach. During the ECAT project, Rahab collected data both on activities it undertook on its own, and with partner bodies including the Human Trafficking Unit of the MPS thus developing its monitoring capabilities.

However, for Rahab to evaluate its outcomes a different evidentiary approach would be required. This might entail personal testimony from the women it cared for, which might chronicle their movement out of crisis situations, the choices they considered and the decisions they made. Finally, it might reflect their current feelings about their lives. The question to be asked here is: are personal reflections enough to judge success or should there be more concrete indicators of reduced vulnerability, abuse or exploitation, or enhanced physical and psychological well-being? What is clear is that the collection of such evidence is valuable but would be time consuming. Moreover, NGOs working on the front-line may not have the extra capacity to collect or analyse detailed evidence to evaluate outcomes fully if funding is available only for service delivery inputs and outputs. Thus organisations, like The Salvation Army, might use this information to illustrate a victim's journey, but it is insufficient for evaluation of outcomes.<sup>31</sup>

## Evidence of Criminal Justice Outcomes

Human trafficking partnerships also aim to improve criminal justice outcomes. During my research I was told by both police officers and NGOs working with victims, that a good partnership between the two facilitated a more effective criminal justice response. It enabled police to obtain information that allowed them to engage in operations which resulted in charging people for human trafficking offences and enabled the Crown Prosecution Service to prosecute them. Police officers could point to data on the number of operations, arrests, charges, and convictions and they were able to describe changes in these outcomes over time.<sup>32</sup> An increase in these figures was viewed as evidence of an improved police response but also, by implication, a validation of partnership working which helped to facilitate criminal justice outcomes. It could also be argued that continued police, NGO and victim engagement is evidence of an effective partnership relationship. However, as I did not speak with victims as stakeholders in this partnership, their views about the impact of working with the police, while supported by an NGO, were not captured. As Gallagher and Surtees have noted, different stakeholders might have different measures of success.<sup>33</sup>

It is equally important to collect evidence of what does not work and why. I was given 'evidence' of NGO and police cooperation that could not be sustained because of poor police practice. NGOs reported that they would facilitate victim contact if police operated in the interest of the victim. I was told stories by different NGO staff of police who: did not seem to believe victims; did not communicate with victims or the NGO about how they were progressing with the investigation; or operated from a police-centred rather than victim-centred approach and thus might be exploiting victims for police purposes. This 'evidence' might be used to engage in dialogue with senior police officers in order to improve police response, but if it is not collected and collated, it may not provide robust evidence of poor policing in relation to human trafficking.

<sup>30</sup> See <http://www.rahabuk.com/about>. For detailed information about the work developed and undertaken by the partner bodies, see *The European Communities Against Trafficking (ECAT) Project Toolkit: Learning from delivery of anti-trafficking activities in London, Italy and Lithuania 2013-2015*, 2016, retrieved 27 March 2017, <https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/380555/response/931025/attach/4/C8.1%20ECAT%20Project%20Toolkit.pdf>

<sup>31</sup> The Salvation Army, *Fourth Year Report on The Salvation Army's Adult Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery Victim Care & Coordination Contract*, 2015, retrieved 10 October 2015, <http://www.salvationarmy.org.uk/files/aht-year4reportpdf-0/download?token=Hv405psG>

<sup>32</sup> Data shown to me by the officers in the Human Trafficking Unit and subsequently by its replacement, the Trafficking & Kidnap Unit of the Metropolitan Police Service.

<sup>33</sup> Gallagher and Surtees, 2012.

Where police forces are able to evidence increased operations, arrests, charges and prosecutions, the data may be used to suggest an improved police response rather than an increased prevalence of human trafficking. However, data on police referrals to the National Referral Mechanism cannot be used on its own to suggest that in some parts of the UK human trafficking is either a low police priority or arises from a low incidence or is a composite of both.<sup>34</sup> Given the political priority attached to tackling human trafficking, evidence on police referrals alongside evidence on prosecutions and convictions might be used to make judgements about police engagement in relation to this crime. In fact, the UK's Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner indicated in his 2015-17 strategic plan that a sustained increase in criminal justice outcomes would be evidence of an improved law enforcement response.<sup>35</sup>

Another important criminal justice outcome is compensation paid to victims for various harms done to them. It too is measurable but this data was not cited during my research. It may be that the police or partner bodies were not collecting and publicising it, or that few compensation claims had been made.

The criminal justice outcomes discussed can also be seen in terms of a larger aim, which is to deter people convicted of trafficking from carrying on with this crime or to deter others from engaging in trafficking. Kara notes that the principle of deterrence rests on punishment, reducing the benefits that can arise from trafficking, like high profit and the freedom to enjoy these profits, and on an increased risk of being caught.<sup>36</sup> Thus the kinds and level of punishment (sentencing, seizure of assets and compensation orders) has to be 'high', and those involved in trafficking networks have to be identified, charged, prosecuted and convicted. The UK Government's 2014 Modern Slavery Strategy sought to increase risk by increasing the penalties from 14 years to the possibility of a life sentence, and by promoting criminal investigations and prosecutions. They also sought to reduce the profit by making human trafficking a lifestyle crime which meant that perpetrators could be subject to the strictest asset confiscation scheme available.<sup>37</sup> Recently, the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner tasked the National Crime Agency with the responsibility to ensure NRM referrals are translated into crime records, which can be used as intelligence and as the basis of an investigation by local police.<sup>38</sup> His aim is to increase the number of prosecutions and convictions which would also increase risk and thus aid deterrence.

What is apparent is that lack of accurate data about the extent of human trafficking means it will be difficult to judge if anti-trafficking initiatives act as a deterrent. Nevertheless, local police forces could use records about convictions for trafficking offences, length of sentences, amount of criminal assets seized and compensation paid, to devise proxy measures of deterrence, with higher figures presumed to have a greater deterrent effect.

Thus, police and partnerships involving police should be more proactive in producing compilations of criminal justice evidence which illustrates the work they have done to achieve justice for victims not only in terms of a conviction but also in terms of compensation for the human rights abuses they suffered. In addition, local partnerships could publicise these outcomes more widely in an attempt to deter people from engaging in human trafficking.

## Conclusion

In this article I have identified serious obstacles that undermine the collection of appropriate and robust evidence that can be used to monitor and evaluate anti-trafficking initiatives and partnerships in England and Wales. Partnerships are based on the assumption that collaboration brings different outcomes than can be achieved by organisations on their own. I have suggested that measuring activities or participants are useful monitoring tools for funding purposes or to demonstrate resource commitments to a partnership but they are inadequate for evaluative purposes. Human trafficking partners seek to raise awareness but only have blunt instruments to measure learning. They seek to train staff in order to increase victim referral and protection. But this relationship, particularly in the statutory sector, may be assumed rather than evidenced. More evidence about victim identification and care may be available from NGOs than from local authorities in part due to inadequate systems of record keeping. This is problematic as local authorities will be unable to evaluate if their responses to human trafficking are sufficient in

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<sup>34</sup> UKHTC, 2016.

<sup>35</sup> Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner, *Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner Strategic Plan 2015-2017*, London, 2015.

<sup>36</sup> S Kara, 'Designing More Effective Laws Against Human Trafficking', *Northwestern Journal of International Human Rights*, vol. 9, no. 1, 2011, pp. 123-147.

<sup>37</sup> HM Government, *Modern Slavery Strategy*, 2014.

<sup>38</sup> Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner, *Annual Report 2015-16*, 2016.



terms of their obligations.<sup>39</sup> In addition, it was clear that outcomes related to enhanced well-being or empowerment were valued by partnerships. However, it was also evident that the data for this might not be available or there were constraints in collecting it.

Criminal justice actions and outcomes are a core aspect of anti-trafficking work. I found evidence was collected in relation to a variety of outcomes like number of victims rescued, operations undertaken, charges brought against individuals, and convictions. In some cases, an increase in criminal justice outcomes was used to validate partnership working. In addition, comments from practitioners were also cited as evidence of an effective or ineffective police and NGO partnership.

As prevention is a core aim of much human trafficking policy, I looked at what action might be needed to deter people from engaging in trafficking, and how evidence detailing outcomes like sentences, seizure of assets or compensation would have to be collected and more widely publicised to aid deterrence.

In conclusion, it is apparent that those making strategic decisions, offering front-line provision or working in human trafficking partnerships require better evidence, more robust and purposeful data collection, more analysis and wider sharing between partners.

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<sup>39</sup> M Sun-Suon, *Human Trafficking and the Role of Local Governments—Good practices, challenges and ways forward*, United Nations Institute for Training and Research, n.d., retrieved 27 June 2016, [https://www.unitar.org/dcp/sites/unitar.org.dcp/files/uploads/newcoverhuman\\_trafficking\\_final.compressed.compressed.pdf](https://www.unitar.org/dcp/sites/unitar.org.dcp/files/uploads/newcoverhuman_trafficking_final.compressed.compressed.pdf)